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20 February 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the President - 20 February 1964 - Alone

1. I advised the President of my willingness to go with him and to meet early in the day with General Eisenhower if he thought this would be constructive. He said he felt General Eisenhower might feel he was being high-pressured and that he intended merely to advise him of the plan to surface the OXCART and exchange formalities. He would then tell him hé was ordering me to go out and brief him in the next week or two and I should make my own arrangements.

2. I told the President we had a very sensitive effective operation working in Mexico City jointly with President Mateos which involved telephone surveillance and was being done in a most careful manner with his knowledge and with the assistance of a few of his trusted officials. This had resulted in a very intimate relationship between our station chief, Mr. Win Scott and the President. Ambassador Mann knew of this from Scott, as did certain selected people in State Department. However President Mateos did not know of Mann's knowledge of the operation and looked upon the operation as an intimate arrangement between himself and the CIA station. I mentioned that Mateos had been best man at Win Scott's recent wedding. I said the President should not mention this but I wanted him to know about it if it was raised by President Mateos.

3. I told President Johnson that we continued our interrogation of Nosenko; our counterintelligence people were inclined to feel he was a plant but had not made up their minds. President said he thought he was probably legitimate and would give us some good information. I said I hoped this was true - that we certainly were taking advantage of everything that he did give us; that we were working closely with the FBI, however we could only conclude at the moment that the Soviet's performance and action were so different from any other defector case that our suspicions had been aroused. The President asked to be kept informed.

4. The President then raised the question of Spain, suggesting I might return to Spain to talk again to Franco. He said he was in a very difficult situation because of announcement of the cut-off of aid to Britain, France and Yugoslavia which he did not know about until he read it in the paper, and that he was beside himself because he wanted to give aid of $31 million to Spain but had the greatest difficulty in the justification.

SECRET-EYES ONLY

I told the President it was my impression from information gained from clandestine sources that Franco had made some moves to curtail trade with Cuba after my visit with him but that the Spanish companies were endeavoring to circumvent his orders by various surreptitious methods. The President asked that I study the matter carefully and speak to him about it next week.

ACTION: I have asked Mr. O'Ryan to contact Noel and I am asking Mr. Ball to contact Ambassador Woodward to determine whether the Spanish had taken any actions which they have announced or might communicate to us which would indicate an intention on their part to curtail or restrict shipping or trade with Cuba.

5. The President then said he wanted to do everything possible to get me out of the cloak and dagger business. That he was tired of a situation that had been built up that every time my name or CIA's name was mentioned, it was associated with a dirty trick. He asked if our economic studies had stood up and I said yes, they had, and that they were reconfirmed and supported by an exhaustive article in TIME Magazine. The President seemed pleased at this, expressed satisfaction in CIA's operations but was most emphatic in his feelings that we should get away from the cloak and dagger image and expressed a determination to bring this about by statements he would make from time to time.

SECRET-EYES ONLY

JAM/mfb